

Paul Proposal to Strengthen Visa Rules Included in New Legislation *Toughens Standards for Saudi Citizens Entering the U.S.*

Washington, DC: Congressman Ron Paul, who first proposed restrictions on visas issued to citizens of Saudi Arabia several months ago, today applauded a new visa program included in recent homeland security legislation. Paul earlier introduced an amendment in the House International Relations committee requiring strict scrutiny of visa applications submitted by Saudi nationals, and he was pleased that a similar version of this commonsense proposal passed as part of the homeland security bill.

"We cannot continue to ignore the role of Saudi Arabia in abetting terrorism," Paul stated. "Hopefully this new rule will draw needed attention to Saudi inaction and duplicity in the ongoing fight against global terror. First and foremost, we must take a very close look at Saudi citizens who want to enter this country, just as we hopefully look at individuals from other countries that support terrorism."

Paul sent a letter to Secretary of State Powell earlier this year, urging the State department to add Saudi Arabia to the list of countries not cooperating with our campaign against terrorism. The letter highlighted Saudi involvement in the September 11th attacks, noting that the majority of the hijackers were Saudi nationals. The letter also stressed that Saudis make up more than half of those arrested by U.S. forces in Afghanistan; that clear evidence exists of Saudi support for al Qaeda; and that bin Laden himself is a Saudi citizen.

"I'm encouraged that the State department finally will be required to scrutinize visa applications from Saudi nationals," Paul stated. "Given recent evidence of Saudi charities funding radical Islamic terror organizations, it's obviously time to rethink their status as an ally."